
Selectboard Minutes 02/04/2015

Minutes

Town of Greenfield

Greenfield Town Offices, 7 Sawmill Road Greenfield, NH

Selectboard's Work Session Minutes

Wednesday, February 04, 2015 – 4:30 PM

Selectboard: Chairwoman Debra Davidson, Selectwoman Karen Day, Selectwoman Margaret Charig Bliss

Staff: David Hall, Fire Chief, Budget Advisory Committee Members: M. Steere, N. Nickerson, D. Boilard, K. Paulsen, S. Moller; Tim Murray, DPW Supervisor; Carol Burgess, Recycling Center Supervisor; Library Director Julie Steenson; Library Trustees: N. Brown, M.A. Grant, B. Dodge,

Public: Sign-in Sheet

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 PM by Chairwoman Davidson.

Documents for Approval/Review/Signature

The Selectboard reviewed and/or signed the following items:

- A/P Invoices
- A/P Checks
- Post Office Mailing Fees for Spirit Mailing - Updated
- Greenfield Spirit – Selectboard Preview
- Quickbooks 1099 issue – Update regarding Computer fees
- Letter from Greg and Karen Martus – re: Driscoll Road
- Southwest Planning Commission – Winter Meeting invite

4:30 PM: Pre-review of Draft 2015 Town Meeting Warrant

The Selectboard reviewed the Draft Warrant in advance of the 6:30PM Budget Hearing. The Board made the following changes and/or grammatical and sentence structure changes to the following:

- Warrant Article #9 – Fire Dept. article; changes in sentence structure
- Remove Police CRF: Vehicle Capital Reserve warrant article for \$5,000
- The Selectboard voted not to recommend the Petition Warrant Article for Old Bennington Road on a motion by the Chair and a 2nd by Selectwoman Day. The motion passed 2-1.
- On a motion by the Chair and a 2nd by Selectwoman Charig Bliss to remove the Recycling Center water and septic warrant article in the amount of \$9,650. The motion passed 3-0. On a motion by Selectwoman Charig Bliss and a 2nd by Karen Day the Board voted to create a new Capital Reserve Fund for the purpose of facility improvements and equipment replacement in the amount of \$5,000. The motion passed 3-0

At 5:15 Kathy Valliere, Greenfield Tax Collector visited with the Selectboard. She updated the Board on her plans for 2015, which include her run for the

Town Clerk/Tax Collector office in Greenville where she is resident. Ms. Valliere asked the Board if they could provide more hours for her in Greenfield. She stated that she would like to see additional weekly hours in the budget, for a total of approximately \$8,000 additional wages during the year. Ms. Valliere said that she was not sure that the hours were needed. The Board declined to bring the request to a vote.

6:30 PM: Public Hearing: 2015 Budget

The Chair welcomed members of the public, staff members, and officials to the Public Hearing on the 2015 Budget. The Chair made opening remarks and noted for the benefit of the public that the Selectboard has changed the budget format for Computer/IT/Software Support and Maintenance by combining these into two budget lines in the Other General Govt. department. There are asterisks next to departmental line items in the 2014/2015 comparative budget to indicate which departmental lines have been moved. Departmental health benefits have also been combined and moved to Personnel Administration. Asterisks outline this move in the 2014/2015 comparative budget detail as well.

At the start of the public hearing, due to an impending storm, the Chair suggested that warrant article #15, Road Paving, be moved to the start of the meeting, along with #16 Highway/DPW operating budget, and #19 Petition paving article for Old Bennington Road, in order to allow DPW Supervisor Murray time to get home early in advance of large storm heading to New England. The move was agreed to by the public.

[The warrant is attached to the minutes at the Town Office. The reading of the articles is not verbatim to the warrant. See the warrant for more detail.]

Article #15 was read. "To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$115,000 for Road Paving." A question by the Chair about the use of the word "Paving" was directed to Supervisor Murray. Mr. Murray confirmed that the shim and overlay of Russell Station Road could be accomplished using this wording, as opposed to "Road Reconstruction", which has been used in the past to allow for ditching, grading, and gravel purchases.

Article #16 was read. "To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$441,299 to support the Highway Department." George Rainier asked a question about the comparative budget report of 2014/2015. Myron Steere asked if there was any information about the gravel processing site. The Chair informed him that DPW Supervisor had written an article in the Spirit that was recently mailed to every household.

Article #19 was moved to follow #16. By Petition. "To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$90,000 for the purpose of finishing Old Bennington Road. Jami Bascom asked a question about the purpose of the article." A short discussion followed regarding the addition of a "wear coat" on the road, which was reconstructed during 2014, versus a winter binder as outlined in previous public hearings and Town Meeting 2014. Bob Marshall asked a question about the tax rate. Myron Steere made a comment about ConVal's budget. Jon Eber asked why the Selectboard does not recommend the warrant article. Selectwoman Charig Bliss said that not recommending the warrant article was not a decision that came easily. Mr. Eber asked if it can be shown that damage has already occurred would the Selectboard support the petition? Selectwoman Day said that we need to go forward with the plan that DPW has in place because other roads are in need of a lot of work. George Rainier said, "that is provided that Board of Selectmen continues to support the warrant articles for roads in the budget".

David Hall, Fire Chief asked the Selectboard if it were possible to move the Fire Department articles forward in order to accommodate the possibility of EMS calls coming through Mutual Aid and taking fire personnel including himself away from the meeting.

Article #7 was moved forward. "To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$20,000 and place this amount into the existing Fire/Rescue Apparatus Capital Reserve Fund." There followed a discussion by the public as to whether \$20,000 was enough funds, given the cost of new fire equipment. Comments and questions were handled by Fire Chief David Hall. Mr. Hall said that he could envision the responsible use of used equipment as there are many large fire departments that turn over equipment on a regular basis. Mr. Hall said that the town has three vehicles that were built in 1986, 1988 and 2001. The 1986 and 1988 are good trucks but are tired. Mr. Hall said he could see the town having end of life discussions regarding the 1986 and the 1988 trucks over the course of the next few years. Bob Marshall asked what the tax rate is likely to be in 2015 if all articles pass [so that people could gauge where we stand overall before adding in additional monies]. The Chair replied that the current budget, if the Selectboard uses a dollar of fund balance when setting the tax rate, will be up \$1.21 if all articles pass including the petition warrant article. George Rainier asked if the town could lease a fire truck (with a buyout). Mr. Hall said "yes".

Article #8 was read. "To see if the town will vote to change the Fire Department Chief's position from elected to a position appointed by the Selectmen, and to make the appointment a part-time paid position with wages ranging from a stipend up to a salary, not to exceed \$20,000, based on qualifications and experience." Myron Steere asked what the current Chief's qualifications are. Mr. Hall replied that he has all relevant Fire and EMS certifications.

Article #9 was read. "To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate \$15,000 for Fire Chief David Hall's wages for the remaining nine months of 2015. If this article passes the Fire Department budget shall be reduced by \$2,000." No questions or comments were raised by the public.

Article #10 was read. "To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$106,558 to support the Fire Department". George Rainier asked a question about the increase in the Radio Repairs and Maint. line. Mr. Hall replied that the pagers cost approximately \$500 each. The Fire Department does not have enough pagers to cover the current membership, which is comprised of 20 people. For future reference he explained that the fire department typically has 30 people and that the roster is currently building toward that number. Norm Nickerson raised a question about Code Red, which is in the Emergency Management line. Chief Hall said that although he is new to Code Red, he is aware that the town has spent \$4,211 a year for several years and only used the service a few times. There followed a discussion on Code Red and other similar systems that are on the market. This includes the reverse 911 program that the State provides. There is also a system that allows first responders to alert people in the fire department if they are responding to a call. Chief Hall said that this service has a much higher level of interest within the fire department. Bob Marshall said that he was in favor of having the fire department make the choice on the best use of the funding, and the choice of which system is the best fit for Greenfield; "leave it to the professionals", he said, "let's not have a group of residents here tonight make the decision for everyone else". George Rainier commented that Department Heads in the past have had the ability to move money among their line items to best serve the town, he was in favor of adding it to the Pager line. Mary Ann Grant asked how many defibrillators the fire department has on hand. Chief Hall said that the department has one but the good news was that almost everyone in the department is licensed to use them. A new AED costs approximately \$1200 - \$1500. Chief Hall said that this brings up a good point; the fire department is now responding to more calls in 2015 than in any previous year. The department is on track to surpass 400 calls for the year. Of the call volume, the number of medical calls is 70% of the total. Mary Ann Grant said that in the past the women's group (auxiliary) bought pagers for the fire department. Norm Nickerson said that the town needs to revitalize the energy committee because both the library and the fire department have large icicles hanging from the

building, which means the roofs are not cold; heat is leaking up into the roof system. He noted that 10% of the library budget is for heat. Katherine Heck, commenting on Code Red, said that it was important that it be in the minutes that the consensus of the public hearing is that Code Red be removed from the budget at Town Meeting. This means not extending the contract. The Selectboard members were agreed that they do not plan on renewing the contract, which is up in April of this year (unless Town Meeting votes to keep it). The public's consensus was that the \$4,211 stay in the budget and be moved by Chief Hall wherever he felt the greatest need.

Article #11 was read. "To see if the town will vote to establish a new Non-Apparatus Fire Department Capital Reserve Fund and to fund said Capital Reserve Fund in the amount of \$7,500 dollars for the purpose of replacing firefighter gear and equipment not associated with the Fire Truck(s)/Apparatus or the Fire Department building". Susan Moller asked a question about past grants for firefighter gear. Chief Hall said that immediately following 9-11 there was a lot of money for first responders in the form of grants, but today's grant environment is highly competitive. The grant that the town used to purchase turn-out gear resulted in all new gear, but the turn-out gear has a life of about ten years. Most of the gear is now well out of date. There wasn't a proactive replacement strategy in place, which needs to change so that gear is purchased yearly.

A request to move the Police Department budget forward was made and approved.

Article #12 was read. "To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$224,123 to support the Police Department". There were no questions asked or raised regarding the police budget.

Article #2 was read. "To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000 to add to the existing Assessment Capital Reserve Fund for the reappraisal of all real estate within the municipality every five years". A question about Avitar Assessing was asked by Norm Nickerson. The Administrator replied that the Board had entered into a one year agreement with Avitar, rather than go out to bid because the town is part of a large group of towns represented by Avitar & Upton and Hatfield in a lawsuit brought by Fairpoint communication. Pat LaPree asked for more information about the lawsuit. There followed a brief outline of the lawsuit and the taxation of the Right of Way after the legislature allowed an exemption of taxation to lapse.

Article #3 was read. "To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of up to \$2,500 for the purpose of expending funds that will be offset by the Used Oil Collection Grant Assistance Program, to purchase materials, and/or obtain services to establish, improve, or operate a used oil collection center". No discussion occurred following the reading of the article.

Article #4 was read. "To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$6,250 for the purpose of glass removal at the Recycling Center". Myron Steere asked if this would end at some point. Carol Burgess, Recycling Center Supervisor replied that when the glass pile on the hill is completely removed the town will then enter into a maintenance plan and removed just the glass that is generated at the center. The original estimate when this article was first proposed in March of 2014, for the amount of time it would take to reach this point was three years. The amount of the warrant article is higher this year to accommodate an increase of glass being thrown out by residents. Supervisor Burgess said that all the towns she has talked to have experienced a similar increase, but no one knows why it's happening.

Article #5 was read. "To see if the town will vote to establish a Recycling Center Facilities and Equipment Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for the purpose of providing capital improvements and replacing equipment at the Recycling Center and to raise \$5000 to be placed in the fund, naming the Selectmen as agents to expend". Myron Steere said that the warrant

article has to be written in such a way that it explains the purpose of the fund. He suggested that the fund be named the facilities and equipment capital reserve. There followed a discussion about the establishment of a Capital Reserve Fund versus funding the water and septic system at the Recycling Center in 2015. Capital Reserve Funds are not meant to be funded and then used in the same year. Their function is to hold monies for specific purposes over a long period of time until the funds need to be expended. A conversation followed about whether other towns have water and bathrooms at their recycling center. It was reported that Francestown does not, the Chair reported that Bennington does not and that it's a common practice for Recycling Center employees to use DPW facilities.

Article #6 was read. "To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$97,685 to support the Recycling Center". There was not a lot of discussion about the warrant article.

A request was made, due to the time being after 8PM that the library warrant article be moved forward in order for the Library Director to close the library.

Article #17 was read. "To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$86,162 to support the Stephenson Memorial Library". No discussion followed.

Article #18 was moved and read. "To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$23,750 to fund the operation of the Town Clerk's office". No discussion followed.

Article #13 was read. "To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$15,000 to be placed in the existing Town Buildings Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund". No discussion followed the reading of this article.

Article #14 was read. "To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$829,540 to support the Operation and Maintenance of the Town". Mary Ann Grant asked questions about the Parks and Recreation budget; specifically with regard to the gardening budget. She reported that she intends to purchase garden hoses for the town with a portion of her budget in order to help facilitate the watering of the flowers around town buildings.

Having completed the reading of the Warrant, the Chair closed the public hearing and thanked everyone for coming to the 2015 Public Hearing on the Town Budget. The Public Hearing was closed at 8:13 PM.

At 8:25 PM the Chair continued the Selectboard meeting with a discussion of Code Red. On a motion by Selectwoman Charig Bliss and a 2nd by the Chair the Board voted 3-0 to discontinue Code Red. The Board asked the Administrator to check on any notice requirements needed to end the contract.

The Board discussed the public hearing and then signed A/P checks and A/P invoices. The Board reviewed clipboard items.

At 8:55 PM the Board voted on a roll call vote on a motion by the Chair and a 2nd by Selectwoman Charig Bliss to enter into non-public session under RSA 91-A:3 IIa Personnel. The vote passed with three Aye votes. At 9:40 the Board voted to leave non-public session. It was noted that the Board had made the decision to provide COLA only to T.M. and to initiate disciplinary action against an employee. The Board sealed the minutes.

Adjournment

On a motion by the Chair, and a second by Selectwoman Charig Bliss, the Board voted to adjourn. The motion carried 3-0. The meeting adjourned at 9:45 PM.

The minutes are final when approved and signed by the Selectboard. A signed copy is on file in the Selectboard's office.

Chair, Debra Davidson

Karen Day, Selectwoman

Margaret Charig Bliss, Selectwoman